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168 WESTERN RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. *Regulus satrapa olivaceus*. A very common winter resident.

169 WESTERN GNATCATCHER. *Poliophtila cærulea obscura*. A common migrant, seen occasionally during the winter.

170 RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH. *Turdus ustulatus*. A spring migrant, usually not very abundant.

171 DWARF HERMIT THRUSH. *Turdus aonalaschkæ*. A common migrant and winter resident; much more numerous some years than in others.

172 WESTERN ROBIN. *Merula migratoria propinqua*. A winter resident but very irregular, appearing some winters in flocks of thousands, while in others they are almost entirely absent.

173 VARIED THRUSH. *Hesperocichla nævia*. A winter visitant but of very irregular occurrence.

174 WESTERN BLUEBIRD. *Sialia mexicana occidentalis*. Seen frequently during the winter.

175 MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD. *Sialia arctica*. A winter resident, some years abundant and in others entirely absent.



Communications.

Concerning the Use of Scientific Names.

Mr. Grinnell's article in the January CONDOR (pp. 20, 21) is a very able argument against the exclusive use of scientific names in popular or semi-popular bird books and journals, though the title is misleading, and the reader would suppose, until he reaches the last paragraph but one, that the protest is against their *general* instead of against their *exclusive* use.

No reasonable person can make serious or well-founded objection to the use of vernacular names in such publications; but since there are evidently some one who regard scientific names as wholly superfluous I desire to present one good reason why the latter should *always* be given, whether accompanied by the vernacular name or not.

So far as I am aware, no one has yet desired a better index to the literature of a particular species than a carefully prepared "synonymy", by which I mean not only the various synonyms themselves but also judiciously selected references under each, arranged in chronological or some other methodical sequence. For several years past the collation of references for such a synonymy of the birds of North and Middle America has occupied a very considerable portion of my time, during which there have been numerous occasions to deplore the absence of the scientific name in connection with some note which records a new fact of geographic distribution, habits, or nidification. Necessarily, these have had to be passed by, since vernacular names are unavailable for citation.

It may be urged that vernacular names are citable as well as scientific names. While this is in one sense true, nevertheless it is impracticable, unless the compiler is willing to double his labor and add unnecessarily to the bulk of his book. In other words, since scientific

names *must*, for various paramount reasons, be cited, the addition of vernacular names would but increase the labor of the compiler and still further complicate the typography of the synonymy.

As examples of the two kinds of records one has but to examine the pages of the January CONDOR. On page 19 occurs a record which I have already cited as follows: "*Harporhynchus redeivivus pasadenensis*, GRINNELL, CONDOR, ii, 1900, 19 (Azusa, Los Angeles Co., California; early nesting, etc.)"; but on the opposite page (18) are several equally important records which, because unaccompanied by the scientific names, must remain buried where they now are.

Personally, I am in favor of the use of vernacular names; but by all means let us have the scientific names also.

ROBERT RIDGWAY.

Brookland, D. C.

Early Collecting Experiences in California.

Pasadena, Cal., Jan. 25, 1900.

Editor Condor:—

I have read with great pleasure the interesting article of Mr. Lyman Belding in the January CONDOR. The article interests me particularly because Mr. Belding's difficulties and experiences were very similar to mine in the study of California birds. Like him, I also was in the "dark" a good many years after arriving from Germany and settling in San Francisco. I did not know any ornithologists and the only books of reference I had were German publications of Dr. Brehm (Tierleben), and of Dr. Karl Russ, which of course mentioned Californian birds but sparingly in these editions (1884). In vain I turned to the collection of birds at the Academy of Sciences for help. The chaos I found there at that time was too great, and I found more mounted canaries and European